



Washington State Department of Agriculture *Hearing Notice*

For immediate release: April 16, 2002 (02-17)
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WASHINGTON STATE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
P.O. Box 42560, Olympia, Washington 98504-2560

Organic standards, clopyralid restrictions, apple standards subjects of hearings

OLYMPIA – The state Department of Agriculture is conducting a series of public hearings in late April on proposals that would modify organic food standards, increase quality standards for apples, and place a permanent ban on the use of the pesticide clopyralid to control weeds in residential lawns and other sites.

Complying with National Organic Program (April 23)

The agency is accepting comments on a proposal to amend the state's organic food standards to match federal standards. All organic food products sold in the United States must comply with the National Organic Program standards by October. Under state law, the state Department of Agriculture provides a program that currently certifies more than 750 farmers, processors and handlers as meeting state organic food standards. Adoption of federal standards is necessary to Washington's organic food industry to maintain access to domestic and international organic markets.

The hearing takes place at 1 p.m. April 23 in Room 205 of the Natural Resources Building, 1111 Washington St., Olympia. The deadline to comment is 5 p.m. April 23. Comments may be mailed to the Organic Food Program, P.O. Box 42560, Olympia, WA 98504-2560; faxed to (360) 902-1924 or sent via e-mail to mmcevoy@agr.wa.gov. Questions may be directed to Miles McEvoy, program manager, at (360) 902-1924.

Restrictions on clopyralid use (April 23)

The agency is holding a public hearing on April 23 to extend the current ban on the use of clopyralid on residential lawns and to allow its use on golf courses and other sites that comply with requirements to keep grass clippings and other vegetation from reaching compost facilities where product is sold to the public.

The agency has proposed to make products containing clopyralid "state restricted use" pesticide when labeled for use on lawns and turf, cereal grains and grass grown for hay. When intended for any of these uses, the products can only be sold by licensed dealers and purchased only by licensed pesticide applicators. The proposed rule would also allow its use on lawns and turf when applied to areas such as schools, parks, and cemeteries if the grass clippings and other vegetation are not sent to composting facilities.

The hearing will be held from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. April 23 via videoconference at four locations: 15 W Yakima Ave., Suite 220 in Yakima; 710 Sleater-Kinney Rd SE, Suite Q in Lacey; 1101 N Argonne, Suite 109 in Spokane; and 1107 SW Grady Way, Suite 112 in Renton.

MORE

WSDA hearings set — Page 2
April 16, 2002

A long-lasting herbicide, clopyralid kills broadleaf weeds such as dandelions, clover and thistles. Clopyralid-tainted compost, however, may cause damage to certain flowers, such as asters and sunflowers. Damage also may occur with vegetables, such as beans, peas and tomatoes. Information on clopyralid in compost is available on the Department of Agriculture's Web site at <http://www.wa.gov/agr/clopyralid.htm>.

Written comments may be sent to Laurie Mauerman, Washington State Department of Agriculture, P.O. Box 42560, Olympia, WA 98504-2560; by fax at (360) 902-2093 or by e-mail at lmauerman@agr.wa.gov. Deadline for comments is 5 p.m. April 24.

Apple standards (April 24-25)

WSDA is conducting two public hearings on a proposal to upgrade two quality standards for apples.

The first proposal increases the amount of sugar that must be in Red Delicious and Delicious apples marketed before Oct. 1 of each crop year by increasing soluble solids requirements. A second proposal would establish minimum firmness standards for Gala and Jonagold apple varieties to provide consumers with a firmer, crisper apple.

Public comment will be taken at 11 a.m. April 24 at the Yakima Agriculture Center, 21 N 1st Ave., Yakima. A second hearing is slated for 10 a.m. April 25 at the WSU Tree Fruit Research Center, 1100 N Western Ave., Wenatchee.

For a copy of the proposed rules or to submit written comments, contact Jim Quigley, manager, Fruit and Vegetable Inspection Program, Washington State Department of Agriculture, P.O. Box 42560, Olympia, WA 98504-2560; fax comments to (360) 902-2085 or e-mail to jquigley@agr.wa.gov. Deadline for comments is 5 p.m. April 25.

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